

Article - Education

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§18–2901.

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) “Eligible institution” means a public or private nonprofit institution of higher education in the State that possesses a certificate of approval from the Commission.

(3) “First-generation student” means a student whose parents have not earned a degree from an institution of higher education.

(4) “Fund” means the Maryland First Scholarship Fund.

(5) “Scholarship” means the Maryland First Scholarship.

(b) There is a Maryland First Scholarship.

(c) An individual may apply to the Office for the scholarship if the individual:

(1) Is a resident of the State;

(2) (i) Is accepted for admission or enrolled in the regular undergraduate program at an eligible institution; or

(ii) Is accepted for admission or enrolled in a 2-year terminal certificate program in which the course work is acceptable for transfer credit for an accredited baccalaureate program in an eligible institution;

(3) (i) Except as provided in item (ii) of this paragraph, attained a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale or its equivalent at the end of the first semester of the senior year of high school; or

(ii) Has completed 40 hours of verifiable community service in the year before applying for the scholarship if the individual graduated from high school more than 4 years prior to enrolling in an eligible institution;

(4) Demonstrates financial need;

(5) Is a first-generation student; and

(6) Meets any other criteria established by the Office.

(d) In addition to providing any other information the Office requires, each applicant shall describe the types of community service completed during high school or in the year before applying for the scholarship.

(e) A scholarship awarded under this section:

(1) May be used for the tuition and mandatory fees and room and board for on-campus housing at any eligible institution; and

(2) May be in an annual amount up to:

(i) 50% of the tuition and mandatory fees charged to the recipient if the recipient is enrolled as an undergraduate student at a 4-year public eligible institution;

(ii) 75% of the tuition and mandatory fees charged to the recipient if the recipient is enrolled at a 2-year public eligible institution;

(iii) 50% of the annual average tuition and mandatory fees of a resident undergraduate student at the 4-year public institutions of higher education within the University System of Maryland, other than the University of Maryland Global Campus and University of Maryland, Baltimore Campus, if the recipient is enrolled at a 4-year private nonprofit eligible institution; or

(iv) 75% of the annual average out-of-county tuition and mandatory fees of a student at the 2-year public institutions if the recipient is enrolled in a 2-year terminal certificate program under subsection (c)(2)(ii) of this section.

(f) Each scholarship recipient shall maintain a grade point average of at least 3.0 on a 4.0 scale to be determined at the end of the academic year during which the recipient held the award and before the recipient's reenrollment for the next academic year.

(g) Subject to subsection (f) of this section, each scholarship recipient may hold the award for:

(1) 5 years of full-time study or 8 years of part-time study at a 4-year eligible institution; or

(2) 3 years of full-time study or 4 years of part-time study at a 2-year eligible institution.

(h) A scholarship applicant or recipient shall file for federal and State financial aid by March 1 of each year.

(i) (1) There is a Maryland First Scholarship Fund in the Commission.

(2) The purpose of the Fund is to provide money for scholarship awards under this section and for administrative expenses incurred by the Commission in making scholarship awards under this section.

(3) The Commission shall administer the Fund.

(4) The Fund is a special, nonlapsing fund that is not subject to § 7-302 of the State Finance and Procurement Article.

(5) (i) The State Treasurer shall hold the Fund separately and shall invest the money in the Fund in the same manner as other State money may be invested.

(ii) Any investment earnings of the Fund shall be credited to the Fund.

(6) The Comptroller shall account for the Fund.

(7) The Commission:

(i) May accept any gift or grant from any person for the Fund;

(ii) Shall use any gift or grant that it receives for a scholarship from the Fund; and

(iii) Shall deposit any gift or grant that it receives for the Fund with the State Treasurer.

(8) The Fund consists of:

(i) Money appropriated in the State budget to the Fund;

(ii) Gifts or grants received by the Commission for the Fund;

(iii) Investment earnings of the Fund; and

(iv) Any other money from any other source accepted for the benefit of the Fund.

(9) The Fund may be used only for:

(i) Making scholarship awards under this section; and

(ii) Administrative expenses incurred by the Commission in making scholarship awards under this section.

(10) Money provided to the Fund that is not awarded by the end of the fiscal year shall remain in the Fund.

(11) (i) At the end of the fiscal year, the Commission shall prepare an annual report of the Fund that includes an accounting of all financial receipts and expenditures to and from the Fund.

(ii) The Commission shall submit a copy of the report to the General Assembly in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article.

(j) The Governor annually shall include funds in the State budget to be used to implement this section.

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